

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY PM/DCA:PSCHOETTLE:ILB
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S/P - MR. HIRSCHFELD
H - MR. BENNETT
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-----050243Z 032462 /14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 048952

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, MARR

SUBJECT: DOD REPORT ON PAST US BIOLOGICAL WARFARE (BW)
PROGRAMS

1. THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE WILL RELEASE TO THE CONGRESS
A REPORT CONCERNING THE HISTORY OF THE US BW PROGRAM. THE
CLASSIFIED VERSION WAS DELIVERED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 3,
AND THE UNCLASSIFIED SUMMARY WILL BE RELEASED TO THE
CONGRESS AFTER TUESDAY, MARCH 8, SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH A DOD
PRESS CONFERENCE.

2. THE ONLY REFERENCES TO THE UK, WHICH APPEAR IN BOTH
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THE CLASSIFIED AND THE UNCLASSIFIED VERSIONS, ARE PASSING
REMARKS THAT DURING WORLD WAR II A PROGRAM OF COOPERATION
INVOLVING THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND PERSONNEL WAS
INAUGURATED. THIS PARTICULAR INFORMATION WAS ALREADY
RELEASED BY THE WAR DEPARTMENT PRESS BRANCH ON JANUARY 3,
1946. HOWEVER, THE RELEASE OF THE DOD REPORT MAY RAISE
PRESS QUERIES ABOUT THE STATUS OF SUBSEQUENT PROGRAMS.

3. WE HAVE INFORMED THE UK EMBASSY (REEVE) HERE OF THE REPORT AND HAVE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS TELEGRAM TO HIM. HE REPLIED THAT HE WOULD INFORM LONDON AND THANKED US FOR

INFORMING THE UK PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC RELEASE DATE.

4. THE FOLLOWING IS THE CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE FOR USE BY THE DEPARTMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN. BEGIN FYI:

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE DETAILS OF THE ARMY'S BW PROGRAMS, SUCH AS TESTING IN US CITIES, HUMAN EXPERIMENTS, ETC., SHOULD BE REFERRED TO THE DOD PRESS SPOKESMAN. HOWEVER, THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS MAY BE RESPONDED TO SHOULD THEY ARISE.

Q. THE DOD REPORT STATES THAT IN AUGUST 1962, THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY SUGGESTED OPEN-AIR TESTING OF BW AGENTS. SECRETARY VANCE WAS THEN SECRETARY OF THE ARMY. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT AS TO WHY HE SUPPORTED SUCH TESTS?

A. IN RECOMMENDING SUCH TESTING, SECRETARY VANCE STATED, "IT IS NOT POSSIBLE, BASED ON YEARS OF RESEARCH, TO ANSWER THE CRUCIAL QUESTION CONCERNING THE ABILITY OF BIOLOGICAL AEROSOLS TO REMAIN EFFECTIVE AFTER LONG EXPOSURE IN THE OPEN ATMOSPHERE WITHOUT CONDUCTING LARGE-SCALE TESTS." IN ORDER TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE FEASIBILITY OF BIOLOGICAL WARFARE AND THE POSSIBLE EFFECTIVENESS OF AN ENEMY BW ATTACK AND OUR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES, WE
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NEEDED TO CONDUCT THESE TESTS. IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THAT THE US BW PROGRAM OF PAST YEARS WAS THE PRODUCT OF QUITE ANOTHER ERA IN WHICH WE WERE CONCERNED THAT POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES MIGHT BE DEVELOPING BW CAPABILITIES AT A TIME IN WHICH WE KNEW VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE POTENTIAL OF BW. OUR POLICIES AND LAWS ARE QUITE DIFFERENT NOW. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT SECRETARY VANCE ALSO RECOMMENDED AN ACTIVE PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM TO INFORM THE PUBLIC OF THE RATIONALE FOR SUCH TESTING.

Q. WHAT IS PRESENT US BW POLICY?

A. IN 1969, THEN-PRESIDENT NIXON UNILATERALLY RENOUNCED ALL USES OF BW BY THE US AND ORDERED OUR BW STOCKS DESTROYED. SUBSEQUENTLY, WE CARRIED OUT THAT DESTRUCTION AND NEGOTIATED AND SIGNED THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION WHICH PROHIBITS THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, STOCKPILING AND ACQUISITION OF BIOLOGICAL AGENTS OR TOXINS "OF TYPES AND IN QUANTITIES THAT HAVE NO JUSTIFI-

CATION FOR PROPHYLATIC, PROTECTIVE OR OTHER PEACEFUL USE"
AS WELL AS WEAPONS AND MEANS OF DELIVERY. THE UNITED

STATES RATIFIED THIS CONVENTION IN JANUARY 1975, AND IT
CAME INTO FORCE IN MARCH 1975.

Q. DOES THE US PRESENTLY RETAIN ANY BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS?

A. NO.

Q. (IF ASKED) DOES THE US TODAY HAVE A BW PROGRAM?

A. NOT IN THAT SENSE OF THE TERM. ALL THE US HAS IS
A SMALL RESEARCH PROGRAM DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO WARNING AND
PROTECTIVE MEASURES. (REFER TO DOD SPOKESMAN FOR FURTHER
DETAILS.)

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Q. (ONLY IF ASKED) DID THE US HAVE A COOPERATIVE BW
PROGRAM WITH THE UK AND CANADA?

A. YES, DATING BACK TO THE MID-1940'S.

Q. (ONLY IF ASKED) WERE TESTS EVER CONDUCTED OUTSIDE
THE US?

A. YES, I UNDERSTAND THESE TESTS WERE CONDUCTED OFF THE
COASTS OF VIRGINIA, CALIFORNIA, AND HAWAII TO DETERMINE
THE DISPERSION OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIALS. (REFER PRESS TO
DOD FOR DETAILS.)

Q. (ONLY IF ASKED) WHAT ARE THESE "BIOLOGICAL SIMULANTS"?

A. THE SIMULANT IS "BG"--BACILLUS GLOBIGII, WHICH IS
HARMLESS TO MAN. THE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE US PUBLIC
HEALTH SERVICE HAS INDICATED THAT THERE IS NOT EVIDENCE
OF INFECTION IN MAN OR ANIMALS FOLLOWING EXPOSURE TO BG,
EVEN IN MASSIVE DOSES. (REFER PRESS TO DOD SPOKESMAN
FOR FURTHER DETAILS.)

Q. (ONLY IF ASKED) WERE HUMAN VOLUNTEERS USED?

A. YES. HUMAN VOLUNTEERS WERE USED, AS FAR BACK AS 1954.
THEY WERE VOLUNTEERS. THEY WERE EMPLOYED TO DEVELOP
VACCINES, JUST AS HUMAN VOLUNTEERS ARE STILL NEEDED FOR
MEDICAL RESEARCH. MANY OF THE RESULTS WERE PUBLISHED IN
PUBLIC SCHOLARLY AND MEDICAL JOURNALS. (REFER PRESS TO
DOD SPOKESMAN FOR FURTHER DETAILS.)

Q. (ONLY IF ASKED) WHAT ABOUT NON-VOLUNTEERS?

A. ONLY INFORMED VOLUNTEERS WERE USED FOR TESTS INVOLVING

HAZARDOUS BIOLOGICAL AGENTS. THERE WERE NO TESTS USING
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HARMFUL AGENTS ON NON-VOLUNTEERS. (REFER TO DOD FOR
DETAILS.)

END FYI.

5. DOD DOES NOT YET HAVE FULL CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE.
HOWEVER, THE DOD PRESS SPOKESMAN WILL OPERATE ACCORDING
TO THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES: A) ALL PRESS QUERIES MUST
BE REFERRED TO WASHINGTON FOR REPLY. NONE WILL BE
ANSWERED IN THE FIELD. B) ALL QUESTIONS DEALING WITH
TESTING OUTSIDE THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES WILL BE
ANSWERED BY QUOTE NO COMMENT UNQUOTE. C) ALL ANSWERS
TO QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO FOREIGN RELATIONS WILL BE
CLEARED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRIOR TO RELEASE.
D) QUESTIONS RELATING TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION WILL BE
ANSWERED WITH THE COMMENT THAT CLASSIFIED INFORMATION
CANNOT BE RELEASED.

6. THIS MESSAGE IS SENT TO YOU FOR INFORMATION ONLY.
BOTH DEPARTMENTS PLAN TO HANDLE THE RELEASE IN A LOW-KEY
MANNER TO MINIMIZE PUBLICITY. SHOULD SUBSEQUENT PROGRAMS
BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, YOU SHOULD REFER ANY QUERIES TO
WASHINGTON FOR RESPONSE.
CHRISTOPHE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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